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PP RUEAIIB
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UTS2319
PP RUEHC
DE RUEHGT #6884/01 2302209
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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6391
INFO RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY BELIZE 3655
RUESMG/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 9839
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 2951
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 6401
RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 0283
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 0523
RUEHTG/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 0681
RUEHDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2131
RUEDEHA/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 06884

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: GT
SUBJECT: SENATOR WILSON'S MEETING WITH MILITARY
- OFFICIALS

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. MEETING WITH NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

SENATOR WILSON, DURING HIS VISIT TO GUATEMALA, MET ON AUG 12 AT THE NATIONAL PALACE WITH THE FORMER HEAD OF THE NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE, GENERAL FEDERICO FUENTES CORADO, AND HIS ASSISTANTS. IN REVIEWING THE COMMITTEE'S WORK FOR THE SENATOR, GENERAL FUENTES CORADO AND HIS AIDES:

-- BRIEFLY REVIEWED THE PROGRAM'S HISTORY SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN JUNE, 1982, BY EX-PRESIDENT JOSE EFRAN RIOS MONTT AND ITS GOALS OF
A) PROVIDING BASIC FOOD AND SHELTER NEEDS,
B) RESETTLEMENT OF DISPLACED PERSONS, AND
C) DEVELOPMENT OF AN ATTITUDE OF INITIATIVE AND SELF-HELP AMONG THE POPULATION.

-- STRESSED THAT THEIR PHILOSOPHY WAS TO EMPHASIZE BOTTOM-TO-TOP DECISION-MAKING, RATHER THAN THE REVERSE.

-- ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY WORKED FROM A PREMISE WHICH ACCEPTED GUATEMALA'S STATUS AS AN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRY DEPENDENT UPON THE EXPORT OF A FEW BASIC COMMODITIES FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

-- IDENTIFIED THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE GUERRILLA

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MOVEMENT IN GUATEMALA AS BEING

- A) INTERNATIONAL SUBVERSION.
- B) THE PRIOR FOCUS IN GUATEMALAN DEVELOPMENT
 - STRATEGY ONLY ON THE CAPITAL CITY AND THE
 - COASTAL PLAINS, AND
- C) THE EXPLOITATION OF GUATEMALA'S INDIGENOUS
 - POPULATION LIVING IN THE HIGHLANDS BY LARGE
 - LANDOWNERS.

ACCORDING TO GENERAL FUENTES CORADO THE AVERAGE SIZE OF LAND OWNED BY HIGHLAND RESIDENTS WAS 25 FEET SQUARE. SINCE THIS WAS INSUFFICIENT TO MEET SUBSISTENCE NEEDS, FAMILIES WERE FORCED TO MIGRATE ANNUALLY TO WORK ON THE LARGE FARMS ON THE COASTAL PLAIN FOR VERY LOW WAGES.

GENERAL FUENTES CORADO POINTED OUT THAT HIS COMMITTEE HAD BUILT OVER 114,000 HOUSING UNITS UNDER THE PROGRAM AT A UNIT COST OF \$269, "LESS", SAID THE GENERAL, "THAN THE COST OF A GALIL". THE GENERAL SAID THAT THE PROGRAM HAD RECEIVED ABOUT \$3.8 MILLION IN FUNDING FROM A.I.D. AND SAID THAT WITH THEIR CURRENT ORGANIZATION THEIR ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY WAS A MAXIMUM OF ABOUT \$10 MILLION IN FUNDING ANNUALLY.

3. MEETING WITH THE MILITARY STAFF

FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE, ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL HECTOR MARIO LOPEZ FUENTES, ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, COL. HECTOR GRAMAJO MORALES, AND THE HEADS OF THE FIVE DEPARTMENTS OF NATIONAL DEFENSE STAFF, GAVE A FORMAL BRIEFING FOR SENATOR WILSON ON THE CURRENT INTERNAL MILITARY SITUATION IN GUATEMALA.

THE SITUATION IN 1982:

GENERAL LOPEZ FUENTES AND HIS STAFF ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IN 1982 VIOLENCE, KIDNAPPINGS, MURDER, AND ELECTORAL FRAUD WERE ALL RAMPANT IN THE COUNTRY. THEY REPORTED THAT 95 TOWN HALLS WERE BURNED BY GUERRILLAS AND THEIR MUNICIPAL RECORDS

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DESTROYED IN AN ATTEMPT TO PREVENT THE ELECTIONS FROM BEING HELD. BETWEEN OCTOBER, 1981, AND APRIL, 1982, THE OFFICERS ADMITTED THAT THE GUERRILLA OFFENSIVE CONSTITUTED A REAL THREAT TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE GOVERNMENT.

THE RESPONSE OF THE ARMED FORCES:

GEN. FUENTES AND HIS STAFF EXPLAINED THAT WITH THE MARCH 23, 1982, COUP WHICH BROUGHT RIOS MONTT TO POWER, THE ARMY INITIATED A NEW, INTEGRATED STRATEGY. THE PLAN, CALLED "VICTORY '82" HAD THREE OBJECTIVES:

- A) TO DEFEND THE POPULATION,
- B) TO RECOVER AND RECONCILE WITH THE GOVERNMENT
 - GUERRILLA SYMPATHIZERS AND COLLABORATORS, AND
- C) TO DESTROY THE CLANDESTINE NETWORKS OF COMMITTEES
 - AND SAFE HOUSES.

BY DECEMBER, 1982, THE ARMY CONSIDERED THAT ITS OBJECTIVES HAD BEEN ACHIEVED, AND PROCEEDED TO

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DRAFT AND IMPLEMENT A FOLLOW-UP PLAN CALLED "CONSOLIDATION '83". COL. HECTOR GRAMAJO COMPLAINED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS PLAN IS STALLED BY GUATEMALA'S SHORTAGE OF MILITARY PARTS AND SUPPLIES. AS AN EXAMPLE, THEY CITED THE FACT THAT ONLY 8 OF THE 28 HELICOPTERS ORIGINALLY ACQUIRED BY GUATEMALA ARE STILL OPERATIONAL. THESE SHORTAGES FORCED THE ARMY TO FOCUS ON SHORT-TERM, RATHER THAN LONG-TERM, OBJECTIVES IN ITS OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

GUERRILLA FORCES

USING MAPS AND OVERLAYS, THE NATIONAL DEFENSE STAFF REVIEWED THE STRENGTHS, TACTICS, AND AREAS OF OPERATION OF THE FOUR MAJOR GUERRILLA GROUPS OPERATING IN GUATEMALA FOR SENATOR WILSON AND HIS GROUP. THESE GROUPS ARE THE "EGP" (PEOPLES ARMY OF THE POOR), "FAR" (REBEL ARMED FORCES), "PGT" (GUATEMALAN WORKERS PARTY), AND "ORPA" (REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION OF THE PEOPLE IN ARMS). IN SEPTEMBER, 1981, THESE GROUPS MET AND SIGNED, IN FIDEL CASTRO'S PRESENCE, AN AGREEMENT TO WORK AS A UNITED FRONT. ACCORDING TO THE BRIEFERS, BUT THE UNIFIED FRONT HAS NOT YET MATERIALIZED.

REDEPLOYMENT

THE GUATEMALAN ARMY HAS ACCEPTED THAT THE SANDINISTAS WILL BE A CONTINUING PROBLEM "FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES" IF THEY SUCCEED IN CONSOLIDATING THE POSITION OF THEIR REGIME. COL. GRAMAJO TOLD THE GROUP THAT THE GUATEMALAN ARMY WAS PREPARED FOR A LONG STRUGGLE, BY ITSELF IF NECESSARY. "IF THE GUERRILLAS WANT TO FIGHT FOR FIFTY YEARS, WE WILL FIGHT FOR FIFTY-FIVE", HE SAID. GUATEMALA IS RE-ORGANIZING ITS MILITARY COMMANDS ALONG THE FRONTIERS AND HAS MOVED FRESH TROOPS TO THE EL SALVADORAN AND HONDURAN BORDERS. THE OUTCOME IN EL SALVADOR, IT WAS ASSERTED, WOULD NOT AFFECT THE ANTI-INSURGENCY CAMPAIGN IN GUATEMALA. BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THAT THE REFUGEE CAMPS LOCATED IN MEXICO NEAR THE FRONTIER WITH GUATEMALA ARE USED BY THE GUERRILLAS FOR TRAINING, INDOCTRINATION, AND RECUPERATION OF THEIR FORCES, THE GUATEMALAN ARMED FORCES ARE NOW BEGINNING A SIMILAR REDEPLOYMENT OF FORCES ALONG THE MEXICAN BORDER.

HUMAN RIGHTS

THE OFFICERS PRESENT FOR THE BRIEFING ADMITTED THAT PROBLEMS EXISTED IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THE MISTAKES THAT WERE MADE IN LATE 1981. BUT ASSERTED THAT MAJOR CHANGES HAD OCCURRED SINCE THE MARCH 23, 1982, COUP IN THE ARMY'S ATTITUDE AND STRATEGY. NOW, THEY ASSERTED, THE ARMY SEES ITSELF NOT AS AN

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ARMY OF "OCCUPATION", BUT RATHER AS A "NATIONAL" ARMY AND THE POPULATION IS VIEWED AS THE ARMY'S NATURAL ALLY, NOT AS A POTENTIAL ENEMY. THE CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM OF GIVING ARMS TO THE PEOPLE, IT WAS ARGUED, IS PROOF THAT THE ARMY BELIEVES THAT IT HAS THE POPULATION'S BACKING IN ITS EFFORT TO COMBAT THE GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS.

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REGIONAL MILITARY TRAINING CENTER

GENERAL LOPEZ FUENTES, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION
FROM THE CODEL GROUP SAID THAT THE ARMY WAS
- CONSIDERING PARTICIPATION IN THE RMTC.
GENERAL FUENTES WENT ON TO ASSERT THAT COOPERATION
WITH HONDURAS WAS EXCELLENT BUT LIMITED
DUE TO GUATEMALA'S SHORTAGES OF MILITARY
EQUIPMENT.

CHAPIN

END OF MESSAGE

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